

## THE CLIMAX OF FEAR

(Continued from page two)

"He is only slightly wounded. He is recovering. The proof of it is that he is now asleep."

Still another added, more frankly, translating the common sentiment:

"And, then, it is his profession!"

The motion was unanimously approved. They found immediately a hundred reasons in favor of the solution, permitting them to saddle on some one else this dangerous mission, which, although Jacinto Ortiz had not even explained it, appeared indispensable to all of them, because it had given birth in their minds to a faint gleam of hope.

"He is a soldier!"

"He is not one of our townsmen!"

"After all, he is paid to receive blows!"

Jacinto Ortiz smiled sarcastically.

"No," he said, holding in his hand the letter which he had sealed, "don't let's talk about that. It is a foolish idea. The man would have his throat cut before he had taken three steps. I will not assume the responsibility for that. Anyhow, it is so slight a chance. It would be better that we all perish together."

They protested. Already the gendarme was being shaken by rude and impatient hands as he lay on his bench, asleep from exhaustion. He opened his eyes in astonishment.

Paying no attention whatever to his weakened condition, they pulled him to his feet and brought him before Ortiz. The brave fellow, not understanding what was expected of him, stood respectfully at attention before the governor.

Ortiz repeated:

"This unfortunate man isn't capable of understanding so perilous a mission."

They protested again:

"Yes he is. He is strong. He is an active, husky fellow."

They felt him with their fingers, as if he represented a piece of merchandise. What he represented, in fact, to these madmen people was a means of saving their lives.

Jacinto Ortiz silenced them.

"No, decidedly no," he said. "I can't sacrifice this man to what is, no doubt, a purely illusory hope of rescue. It means certain death to him."

But in an instant they had pushed the gendarme to a door of the court leading to a street which they supposed to be less well guarded than the others, although the cries outside showed that danger was everywhere. Some of them tried to inspire the stupefied soldier with patriotic exhortations, comic as coming from them. Others gave him the money and jewelry they had with them. They were about to thrust him through the door when Jacinto Ortiz snatched from him the letter, which, passed from hand to hand, had already been put into the gendarme's leather bag.

"To think," he shouted to the panic-stricken councilors, "that you don't even know what is in the letter!"

He assumed the ironical tone of a man who has carried through a cynical experiment and is about to see his worst calculations realized.

"For a purpose you know nothing about," he said, "and solely because you are clutching at an imaginary straw, you cheerfully send one of your own people to death!"

He burst into a nervous laugh.

"Don't you understand, wretched people, that I have devoted the last moments which remain to us (since every effort to escape is now impossible) to making sport of you, to experimenting with your abjectness? It has pleased me to find some amusement in your ironomy. What I wrote a few minutes ago in this letter without any address—a detail which none of you even noticed—in this letter which made you light-heartedly condemn one of your own companions—I am going to read it to you."

And while the mob was breaking down the palace doors and beginning to rush in—while the menacing clamor came nearer and nearer—Jacinto Ortiz read this:

"There is nothing more lamentable than the spectacle of human cowardice, especially when such cowardice is without avail."

# THE SCENARIO OF THE SHIRTS

By FAIRFAX DOWNEY

Illustrations by ELLISON HOOVER

## TALE OF HY-LAN THE CALIPH

(Continued from page three)

"From the great love I bear my people and the care that I have for their welfare, I shall oppose this iniquitous plan. I, even I, the Caliph, shall gird on my armor of righteousness and fare forth to the Wells of Al Bany, and I shall meet these conspirators on the field of tourney and roll them in the dust and bring utter confusion to their ranks. For I am for the people and home rule, and against the interests and port development. Assuredly, the right and the Caliph shall prevail."

Then when the messenger had retired the good Caliph Hy-lan of the Ruddy Countenance called together his scribes and instructed them, saying:

"Prepare me at once a plan of port development so that I by my wisdom may confuse those who plan to better my city without my aid. Also write for me a speech assailing those who plot against me. In this connection look up the sayings of the Sheikh ul Islam concerning the manners and methods of Haroun Al Smith."

And while this was being accomplished, repaired the Caliph to his mirror and there practiced assiduously denunciatory gestures until lunch time. And word went forth to the men of his host that they should prepare themselves to march against the Wells of Al Bany under the green banner of the Front.

And on the eve of the day when the plan of the conspirators was to be laid before the Sultan Nathan, the Pasha Whalen sought his lord, and found him in his chamber teetering over and over the polysyllables in his speech of condemnation. And he bowed low before the Caliph, who hailed him, saying:

"Behold thy lord on the eve of going forth to battle for the cause of his people. How do you pronounce 'ch-i-e-a-n-e-r-y'? It is my intention on the morrow to scatter my foes utterly. For I am for the people and against the interests and in the morning I fare forth to meet my foes at the Wells of Al Bany."

Then said the Pasha Whalen:

"Lord, if so thou dost, it will be needful for thee to pay a day's room hire at the Beach of Palms for thy hotel reservation beginneth on the day following the morrow."

And the good Caliph laid down the speech which he had been conning, and quoth:

"Wot?"

And the Pasha Whalen replied: "Even so. O Lord of a Thousand spears, before whom the toad and the jellyfish delight to battle, I have done thy bidding. If thou goest to the Wells of Al Bany to protect the common people, thy protector is going to be stung for an extra day's board at the Beach of Palms."

Then asked the Caliph slowly:

"I am for the people and against the interests. Is board at the Beach of Palms as high as formerly?"

To which the Pasha Whalen replied:

"Higher. And, furthermore, it hath come to my ears that Haroun Al Smith himself is prepared to do battle with thee if thou goest to Al Bany."

Then replied the good Caliph: "Kismet. I am for the people and against the interests, but change the tag on my trunk and inform those of my host who go forth to battle tomorrow against the forces of iniquity, that I expect them to fight as valorously as though I myself were leading them. At what time does the train for the Beach of Palms start? After all, oh Pasha, there is such a thing as too great a devotion to the people and too great hostility to the interests. Stay, before we go, until I leave behind for my followers a word of inspiration!"

Then wrote he as follows:

"It's easy enough to keep smiling.  
When the Caliph is making a speech:  
But the man that's worth while  
Is the man who can smile  
When Hy-lan has gone to Palm Beach."  
And the people of the city, when they received the words of the Caliph smiled as he had bade them.

I dread the sight of a domestic quarrel developing on the screen

THE kind of control most urgently needed in the movies is not plays, but regulation of the production of infants' wear.

Valuable as the services of the Postmaster General may be in mediation and distribution they could not begin to compare with the abstract application of the new fangled science in benefiting the art of the motion pictures—and to their profit, too, if you want to drag them in.

The need for control—nay, for rigorous repression—is in the innumerable "big scenes," where the well meaning but blindly thoughtless husband is about to fling out into the night, deserting forever the sincere at heart but temporarily frivolous young wife. Abuse, recriminations, tears, all have failed. As the husband dashes back into the room for the last time—he has forgotten his gray suede spats—he notes the wife hurriedly concealing a sewing basket and snatches it from her.

Ah, gentle reader, what is there in the sewing basket so hurriedly concealed and so rudely snatched?

Right. In the sewing basket so hurriedly concealed and so rudely snatched there are Tiny Garments!

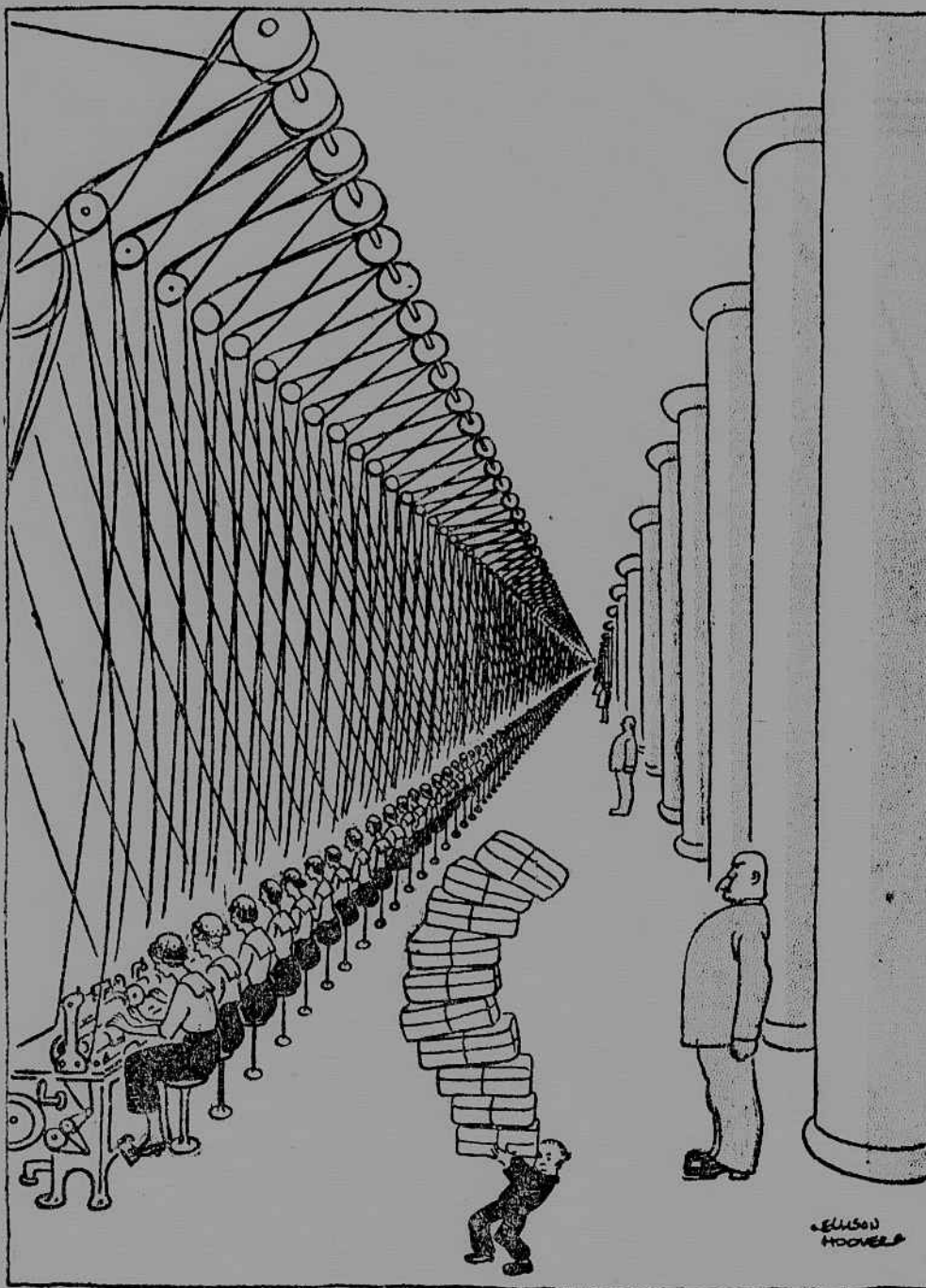
A Little Stranger, so it would appear, is coming.

Nothing now is possible, in accordance with all the best regulated movie traditions, but a reconciliation and the registration of much joy.

Hence this fervent plea that a restraining order of some sort be enjoined upon the movies. The device of the Tiny Garments was all very well back in the days when the films used to flicker so they hurt your eyes and the caption writers didn't try to "say it with flowers." But it has been utilized since with such appalling frequency that it seems to have become a movie maxim of unflinching effectiveness that any wife to earn any husband simply has to flash a shirt, infant's size, at him.

Personally, I have got to dread the sight of a domestic quarrel developing on the screen. I sit on the edge of my seat and pray that it will be just a passing disagreement. I catch myself hoping that the scenario will call for some distraction such as a fire or a murder to end the storm in the home, for I know only too well that if that quarrel goes too far sure as shooting there will be an exhibit of needlework on attire for the young.

More than once I have left an advantageous placed and expensive seat and fled the theater when I saw the inevitable coming, and oft as not I have not been in time. Soft "Ahs" and "Ohs" from the feminine cheering



Keeping up with the movie demand for infants' wear. Looms supplying the tiny garments which break the news that "a little stranger" is coming

section of the audience have apprised me that my dire forebodings have been fulfilled and that the screen has carried the customary advance note on What the Little Strangers Will Wear.

It is an unintended tribute to the influence of the movies on life, but I must admit that I now shy at the sight of a layette and am startled for a moment when I observe a lady who has been having a tiff with her husband draw a handkerchief.

It is time a stop is put to it. There have been in the movies far too many surreptitious sewing baskets. I yearn for the day when the starry-eyed actress using one of them will produce from it, instead of the conventional articles, a well-hemmed tea towel or a neatly darned washrag. There has been a superfluity of utterly flabbergasted prospective pupas. We are overstocked on whisperings of the Glad Secret and sudden reconciliations.

It always has been considered legitimate among the best novelists as well as dramatists, to kill off characters to solve a problem. It was regrettable in a way, and some of the characters died hard, but that didn't make bad reading or acting, and, after all, the problem had to be solved. The procedure of the scenario seems to be to produce a brand new, strictly fresh character for any emergency. Births, the scenarioists seem to think, will clear up any difficulty from unrequited love to a contested gubernatorial election.

To the mind of the scenarioists that happy ending demanded by the movie going public

is in plain view from the moment that the wife murmurs in one of the ears of her husband and he recoils, registering departed wrath and arrived amazement. The caption writer cringes through for him with:

"YOU MEAN —!"

She does. You can tell it by her downcast eyes. As for the husband, he will continue looking astonished until the caption:

CAME A DAY

when he will receive the requested permission from a bearded physician, tiptoe into the boudoir, raise the coverlet and share with the audience a close-up of the rather startling features of the "extra" who has been cast as the Little Stranger.

The only complication to this problem-solving device which has arisen in all the years it has done duty may be credited to the censors in a few states. They have cut out these "big scenes" heartily from the point of the quarrel until the moment when the reconciliation is a fait accompli. For the sake of continuity the gap has been filled in by an imaginative portrait of a stork winging his way through the cosmos with a bundle pendant in his beak.

This panacea for movie plots has already appeared this year in one of the most pretentious pictures put forth, and it may be counted upon to go on its hardy perennial way through all the productions of the year. We will see it in the cabin on the Yukon, where a couple are indulging in an acrimonious dispute which augurs ill for the peace and integrity of their



Soft "Ahs" and "Ohs" from the feminine cheering section

little home in the frozen north. Their nerves have been worn raw by the failure of the gold crop and the fact that the coal for the winter has not been delivered. The argument is interrupted by the entry of criminals tracked by the Royal Northwest Mounted Police, who fight and exit. The man and his wife quarrel again. Suddenly the woman draws an infant's size sleeping bag from the cupboard. The man grasps it, wraps it around his neck, seizes a pick and shovel and dashes out into the snow with great determination. Caption:

AND LATER

Scene of happy family seated in the snow. Mother and father registering joy and baby teething on a large gold nugget.

We may even see the panacea in this:

Scene—Desert island in the South Seas. A handsome young couple shipwrecked there. They fight with cannibals. Tableau of a triumphant man and a worshipping woman. Caption:

AND THERE IN THE SIGHT OF THE SEA GULLS THEY PLIGHTED THEIR TROTH

Fight with wild animals. Fight with each other. Man about to swim away into the horizon. Woman exhibits leopard skin, cut for the child trade. Man greatly startled. Decides not to swim away. Fade out with man standing on beach against the sun and gazing pensively at sharks.

Or, finally, a million-dollar production with a plot such as this:

The Duke of Bismuth is involved in a terrific intrigue for the throne of Penumbria. As a step to secure it he is about to go before the Agoraska to demand a vote of confidence in spite of the fact that his succession to the crown would involve his putting aside the bride of his youth and tribulations. Forgetful of the dark days when the duchess stuck to him, the duke starts rummaging through the drawer where the dual gems and other precious objects are kept in search of a jeweled flask which will give him some confidence even before any is voted him.

Instead of the flask he finds a tiny pair of socks. Confronting his consort, he is captioned as saying:

WHAT GOES ON, DUCHESS?

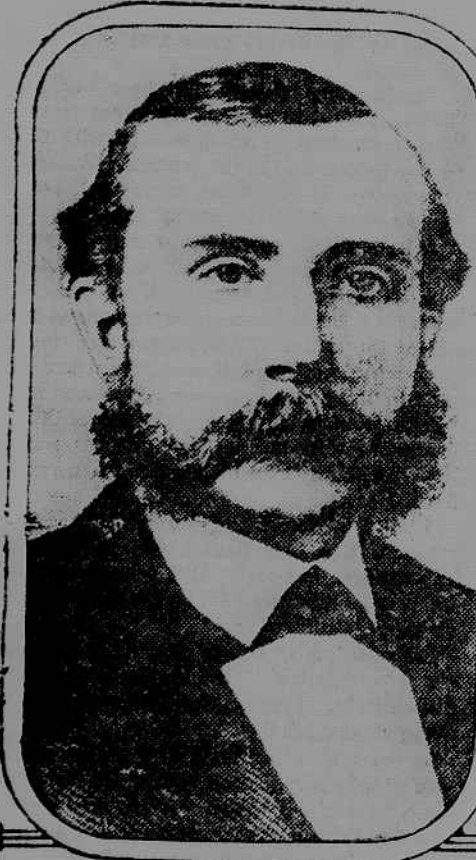
Her grace lowers her eyes, as they all do, and replies via caption:

CAN YOU NOT GUESS, DUKE?

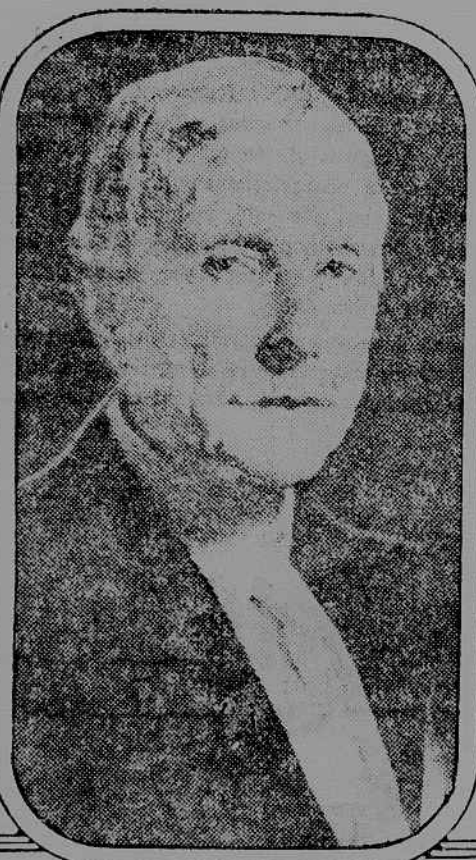
The duke can't guess—they never can at first. Then the duchess lowers her eyes even further and dimples and the duke guesses. Of course, the knowledge saves him from his wicked ambition and contents him with his simple dual lot.

And so it goes and will go on in the movies until some genius provides about-to-be-deserted wives with some less obvious method of restraining husbands about to exit in rage, such as a lasso or a grappling hook or a combination boomerang and custard pie.

## GENTLE DEALS BY FATHER TIME



John D. Rockefeller plus many millions equals John D. Rockefeller



What twenty busy years have done to Charles M. Schwab



The cares of youth no longer weigh heavy on the Secretary of State

